CRASH

FREE SAMPLER

*STILL THE BEST
SPECTRUM
MAGAZINE…
34 YEARS ON!*

OVER 10 NEW GAMES REVIEWED

*NICK ROBERTS'S
PLAYING TIPS
RETURNS*

COVER CRACKERS

The best game cover art remembered

*SIMON BUTLER'S
SCREEN$*
8-bit art celebration

PLUS! LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM IS BACK!

**MR HAIR AND THE FLY, RAT-A-TAT, DUCKSTROMA,
RESTLESS ANDRE, COLORISTIC… AND MORE!**

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ADVENTURE TRAIL
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CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM

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FUSION RETRO BOOKS

CRASH, BANG, WALLOP!

A NEW DAWN APPROACHES

I'd be lying if I claimed to know what were the first words that I typed for issue one of CRASH, but I expect they were for a game review. Our mail order catalogues were packed with 'reviews' of games both wonderful (*Jetpac*, *Manic Miner*) and awful (enter appropriate title here), but we were flogging as many titles as we could, so they were hardly critical reviews. And they brought in the local kids to buy from the door and several of those sprightly horrors came back to complain...and so the idea for

CRASH's unique reviewing system was born. In the prior months, at the Ally Pally ZX Micro Fairs, Oli and I had made friends with most fledgling software companies whose games we sold.

Now it was different. How was I to explain to XYZ Software that a twinkly-eyed 13-year-old Ludlow schoolboy said their prized Froggerpede Attack was 'a steaming pile of w**k'? (apart from a lecture that it doesn't actually steam —'Haha, sir, and how do you know that?' 'Get outta here!'). And so, battling to write critical, honest game reviews came

first, with the able help of 17-year-old Matthew Uffindell playing whichever game it was as I attempted to turn three enthusiastic playground write-ups into intelligible reviews without altering their combined opinion. Somehow, I think we succeeded.

However, my first words in the editorial still hold well for the future of CRASH, I think. Musing on the magazine's name I wrote: 'I like to think it symbolises more the power and strength of the computer game than anything else.

As a magazine title CRASH is short, sharp and to the point, and anyway it makes it the only computer magazine without the word computer stuck somewhere in it, and that must be worth some points!' As I hand over to the next generation, so many years later, let my last words be: Long live CRASH!

Long live CRASH indeed — great words Roger, and thank you from all of us readers, fans and friends for everything you have created and contributed to over many years, including Newsfield and beyond. You continue to be an inspiration to many.

And so here we are — a new issue of CRASH in a new format that I hope you all will enjoy each quarter.

We will be covering all the latest games on both the Spectrum and Next, with a smattering of features and regular slots you all love.

Long live CRASH!

THE NEW CRASH COVER

So another CRASH Annual is about to be in the hands of fans. Over the last number of months I have been regularly asking, 'Is it done yet?' with responses from Oli over the weeks of, 'Nearly, just "this" to do, and "that" to do'. Roger tells me that this is what it was like back in the day, so I have got used to nagging Oli now, and he is used to being nagged. Here are a few pics of the cover, based on XXX.
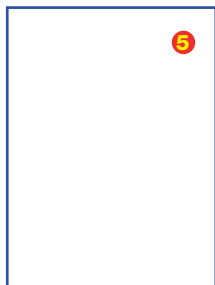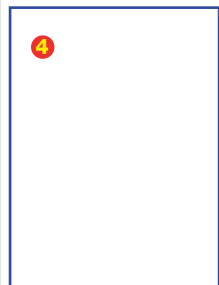
1. First sketch on back of an envelope, getting the composition dynamics sorted.
2. Enlarged rough on 4 sheets of A4 with logo, straps for guide, ready to trace down onto art board
3. Traced down pencil and start of b/w wash inking underpaint.
4. XXX — it was a job, 'scumbling' the colours for drama and risking ruining everything if it didn't work
5. Background landscape painted in, ready to paint XXXX.
6. Finished

COLORISTIC

Author: Martin Borik, ub880d
Memory: **48K/128K**
Released: **2020**

9
level

A h, the sedate puzzle game; lives aren't at stake, there is no approaching menace to thwart and there is no time limit to hinder one's progress.

The mobile phone market is common place for such "toilet seat" entertainment these days, so it's good to see it return to a format which doesn't have a huge abundance of games of this genre.

Coloristic is a minimalistic puzzler based on the mobile game of the same name. The main idea is for the player to fill all the squares on a tile-based grid by moving a coloured line, square by square and within a finite number of moves. Your origin square, where you start off from indicates how many moves you have and you can move in any 90 degree direction from there, barriers permitting. All moves

must be taken, so for example, if your start point states '5' then you must use up all five moves. With each step, the counter deducts by one, therefore it's easy to keep tabs on your movements.

This is simple enough in the first few levels as there is only one line available to manoeuvre around the grid. As the game progresses you find yourself in control of up to five different lines (all can be chosen with the numeric keys at any time) and you must logically solve the correct routes for all of them — all

moves must be used up. The learning curve gradually builds up over the 80 levels and by the last 20, you will most certainly be challenged to the max.

CRITICISM

• The first thing that

appeals to me in *Coloristic* is the look of it. It looks like an inbuilt game that you would choose from the Spectrum 128K menu.

The off-white background, the shadowed boxes and the fonts used all add up to make it look operating system bespoke.

1
level

C•O•L•O•R•I•S•T•I•C

It is a lovely slow-paced game in which I had all the time in the world to make my decisions. At first, it was rather easy and the early levels acted as a simple tutorial. But before I knew it, the difficulty crept up and I found myself my attention starting to wane — I felt I had seen and played enough. Repetition aside, I found the game really enjoyable and I loved the brilliant AY music that accompanied the experience.

Gordon King

really having to think and juggle between the different coloured lines I could choose.

However, as the game goes on and the difficulty increases, I found but underneath is a fiendishly challenging game which really shows its colours on the later levels as the difficulty setting is ramped up.

What is great about new releases on the Spectrum is that many come with a great AY tune — and that is what we have here and it's a joy to listen to.

Overall a nice little game, that I kept coming back to, to have 'one more go' to see if I could get to the next level.

Chris Wilkins

CRITICISM

• What a great game to play on a chilling Sunday afternoon to pass the time.

The game looks quite simple in its presentation,

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q, A, O, P
Joystick: Kempston
Graphics: Subtle, but smooth
Sound: Fantastic 128K music/sound
General rating: A lovely laid-back puzzler, but eventually repetitive.

Use of Computer	70%
Graphics:	69%
Playability:	80%
Getting started:	85%
Addictive Qualities:	77%
Overall:	78%

CRASH Micro Sampler   **7**

BLOCKZ

Author:
Raymond Russell
Memory: **48K**
Released: **2020**

When you think of block puzzle games, the usual Tetris-types spring to mind, or indeed the original itself. Many have come and gone and with most, the aim is to clear the screen of the blocks to move to the next level.

This one, however, is a little different. Not content with you having to fit blocks into spaces, author Raymond Russell does not want you to have too much control on which way the blocks move — their movement is dictated for you.

This can mean only one thing — lots of planning and forward thinking. With the challenge of the blocks playing by their own rules, and a time limit to boot, you have here a very tricky yet compelling puzzler indeed.
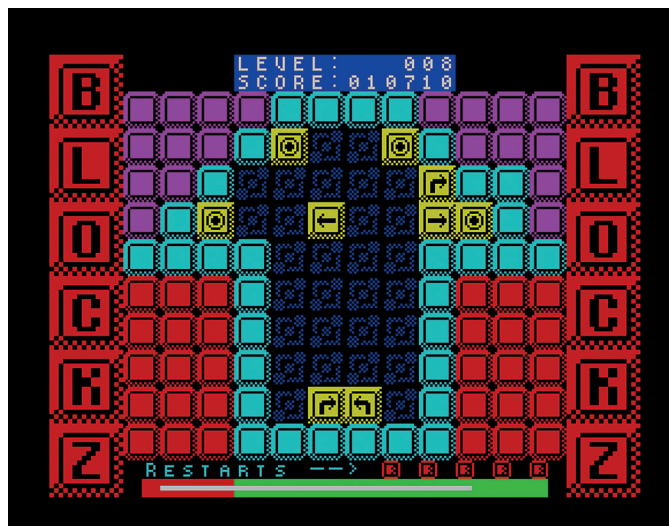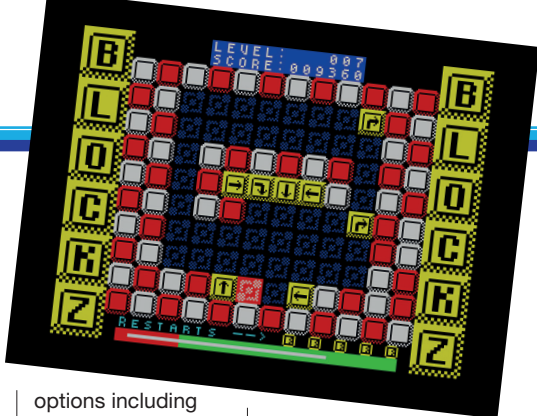
CRITICISM

• BlockZ introduces itself with a nice flashy logo and a menu with a selection of options including a demonstration to show you how the game works. The title music is quite splendid and features different tunes throughout the game which are also very good. Start the game and you'll find a wall surrounding the screen and a set of blocks around the inside. To clear the blocks, you need to find a way to get the rocks to touch one another at the end of their move. The blocks have different types of arrows on them that dictate which way they will move when you select them. An arrow moving to the right and then bending upwards will have it moving right and then turning upwards, for example. Some will have multiple directions whilst others just the one. It's worth noting that you can move each block more than once if there is space to do so — although each of the moves will be in the same direction.

What proves interesting is that should your block have more than one direction but is not able to complete its initial move, it will carry out its secondary direction which often comes in handy.

BlockZ is a nicely put together game, and coupled with a great soundtrack makes the package complete. It's a great challenge with a nice new twist to the
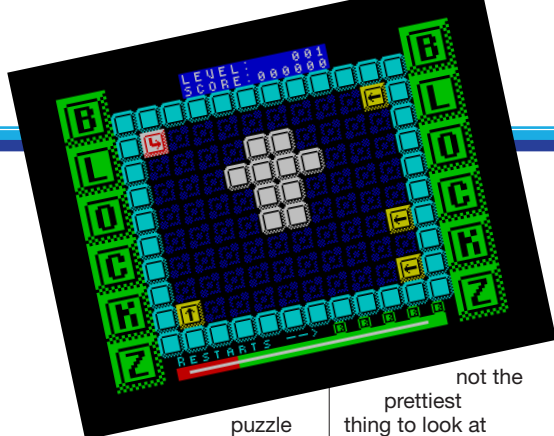
puzzle genre of games that will have you playing for a good while. It will also have you pulling at your hair at some points though, in a good way.

Paul Davies

• Sedate, tile-based puzzlers are the perfect thing for a rainy Sunday afternoon; the roast is in the oven and you just want to slouch and not overly occupy your adrenal glands during a mini-gaming session. *BlockZ* is just the ticket for that. From the outset, this taxing little title does not hold your hand — one mistake and it will cost you a retry life. In the aesthetics department, it's not the prettiest thing to look at but everything is very functional and it's clear what each block's characteristics are. Each level doesn't really change in appearance all that much so you pretty much have 50 levels of similar puzzles to solve. It is in this that it gets a tad repetitive for me as there is no sense of progress beyond 'yet another level'. I did find the time limit to the level both enjoyable and frustrating.

Gordon King

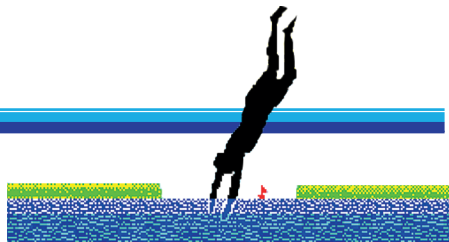**COMMENTS**

Control keys:
Q, A, O, P / Defineable
Graphics: A good smattering of colour
Sound:
128K tune and effects
General rating: A clever, but fiddly puzzle game.

Use of Computer	70%
Graphics:	60%
Playability:	75%
Getting started:	75%
Addictive Qualities:	70%
Overall:	73%

RESTLESS ANDRE

Publisher:
ESPECTROTEAM
Authors:
**Jaime Grilo,
Pedro Pimenta
Filipe Veiga**
Memory: **48K**
Released: **2020**

It only took a lifetime to build up the courage to return to the open water. Jaws achieved irreparable damage for keen

oceanic swimmers, convincing the world of the dangers that lurked within its realms. 40+ years on, and this scarred reviewer is about to dip his toe in the ocean again; along comes *Restless Andre* to remind me that there truly is a threat to life if I dare venture into this aquatic frontier.

Restless Andre is a top-down, single-screen affair in which you control Andre, who begins the game as a nutter of a swimmer tasked with navigating the maze of harbour walls to collect a variety of items within the landscape in order to progress to the next level. Of course (and back to the Thalasso-phobia), there are the creatures of the deep to avoid at all costs, as they are fatally dangerous. A number of them rove in a predetermined fashion, while others are as random as a plate of jelly on the Waltzers.
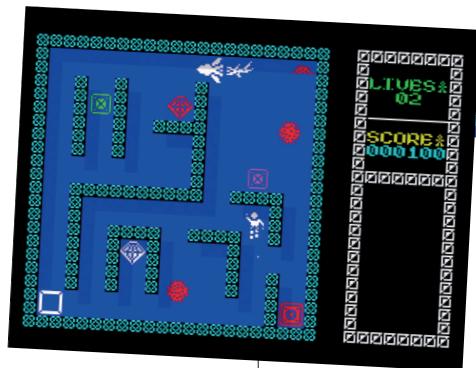
There are sharks, sea-urchins, and stingray to contend with that make completing a simple collect-em-up task a dire challenge.

Fortunately for those who don't like it wet, the game progresses onto dry land upon which our fidgety hero drives cars over various terrain, avoids desert hotrods and metropolis traffic.

Then in true 'I'm bored with this!' fashion, he even flies an aeroplane to satisfy his adrenaline addiction (and lack of attention span).

Each of these themes help to inject some variety into what is otherwise the same core game of 20 levels.

CRITICISM

• Overall the game is charming, and it genuinely looks good and plays rather well. It's accompanied by a really excellent 128K tune that is sure to be an earworm in my head. The main

issue I have is the bloody difficulty — is it just me, or have my evasion skills in games declined greatly as I approach the wrong side of 40? I thrice-fold died before I barely set foot in the water; the random movement of some of the baddies made it hard for me to gauge timing in such small confines.

Perseverance paid off and I managed to escape the clutches of the water and made it to the land and skies... and died some more. Clearly, I enjoyed it enough to want to see more — and I'm glad I did, but the game has no real staying power. It's ultimately very repetitive hiding behind the veneer that is a variety of graphical changes throughout the game.

Gordon King

CRITICISM

• The game is nice and colourful with

some neat animation on our protagonist and particularly on the sharks you have to avoid. It's a nice challenging little puzzler requiring some expert timing in order to progress to the next level. It has enough charm to keep you hooked.

Paul Davies

COMMENTS

Control keys: Defineable
Joystick: None
Graphics: As good as they need to be for this type of game.
Sound: Functional
General rating: Nicely made, well presented, but it's never going to be a firm favourite.

Use of Computer	79%
Graphics:	76%
Playability:	75%
Getting started:	76%
Addictive Qualities:	65%
Overall:	74%

DUCKSTROMA

Authors:
AB-UltraNarwhal, Shiru
Memory: **48K, 128K**
Released: **2020**

In the cutthroat world of the courier business your trust, and more importantly, expediency, is paramount to survival. We've all had that less-than-fortunate experience with the nameless few dispatchers who disapprovingly throw our anticipated parcels into wheelie bins and hedges.

Proving your company is not one of those fly-by-night shysters is probably the single most challenging thing that faces any new contender.

Our duck hero Aura is about to have her most dangerous day yet; the consignment that she's agreed to will be her most dangerous. Normally, she would pick up the package from the client and deliver it to the recipient. On this

occasion, however, she has to she has to navigate her way around the client's estate in order to collect eight floppy disks. The way is fraught with dangers — rabid-rabbits, robots, and floating mines are but a few of the hazards that endanger Aura's brutal deadline.

This cutesy, flick screen platformer involves our feathered heroine taking huge risks by navigating the terrain, avoiding the dangers, and using the power of her eggs to reach those inaccessible places.

The latter is a key feature to the game, and once the egg is laid, it counts down

patiently timing a pathway through the menacing denizens of the day, our webbed feet wanderer can find her way to all the locations where the disks are stored. This was clearly not in the job description.

able to study it and work out the best route to take — that didn't mean I was successful, but it does suggest that the rooms are well laid out. The 128K music is absolutely incredible, and it's one of those games you'd fire up with the sole purpose of listening to the tune.

The few things that do bother me are the sluggish and jerky movements of the sprites — it just doesn't feel smooth enough for full enjoyment. Some of the animation frames of the enemy sprites are out of alignment, so they look a little erratic during their looping cycle. None of this is major, but it does detract from the game's overall immersion.

Gordon King

CRITICISM

• The overall presentation of *Duckstroma* is very cheerful indeed. The general, and highly colourful, aesthetics are a treat to the eyes. With the graphical

until it explodes. This provides the lift that Aura requires and launches her beyond the height of her regular jump. Mastering this technique and

style and the screen layouts, I found this very *Monty Mole*-like, which induced copious amounts of nostalgia in me. I found that with each new room, I was

CRITICISM

• *Duckstroma* has a lovely graphical intro, with a very catchy 128K tune playing along which gives a fantastic first impression of the game.

The graphics of this platformer are top notch, and using your 'laid' egg to get to various parts of each screen is rather creative (last time I saw an egg explode like this was in the microwave).

Enjoyable — and that 128K tune is so gorgeous, this game is one of those you load up just to listen to the tune.

Chris Wilkins

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q, A, O, P
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair.
Graphics: A good smattering of colour
Sound: Brilliant 128K tune and effects
General rating: A fun old-school platformer that is flawed but still very decent.

Use of Computer	80%
Graphics:	86%
Playability:	79%
Getting started:	81%
Addictive Qualities:	77%
Overall:	79%

RAT-A-TAT

SCORE 000000 SRT-01 CHEEZ 86

LUGGAGE . . . .

Author: **John Davies, Pedro Pimenta, Andy Green**
Memory: **128K**
Released: **2020**

I'm sure on a lot of flights across the world, there will be a rat or two that managed to sneak aboard a plane and tow, and started making plans for his visit.

Unfortunately, a rather large storm interrupted proceedings and shook the cargo doors open, leaving Ratty, and his suitcase, falling to the ground.

Good job he

SCORE 000000 SRT-01 CHEEZ 62

LUGGAGE . . . .
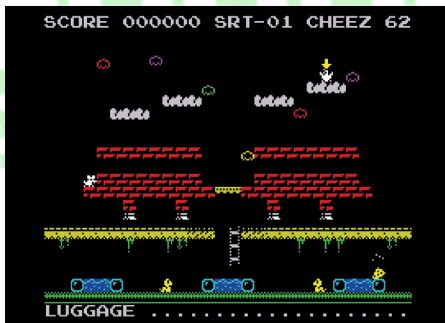
hide in the cargo hold, eager to bag themselves a free flight somewhere. If they could read then they may have a clue where they're actually headed rather than it being just potluck — unless of course, they were just after an adventure.

Our protagonist here, Ratty, had always wanted to visit London, so he scurried on board the nearest plane heading for the UK capital, luggage in

had a parachute. His suitcase unfortunately did not, so it's now down to Ratty to scour the city to look for and collect his belongings. With a hungry belly craving cheese and the usual enemies you find in London (giant worms?), how will he fare in his quest?

CRITICISM

• Ratty is quite spritely, moving around pretty smoothly and has a

bit of jump on him which is good, as sometimes there's quite a distance between platforms — these will still require some pixel perfect accuracy though.

The one thing you will notice about *Rat-A-Tat* is that once you move across to the next screen, there's no going back even if you haven't collected your suitcase item from the previous room. This is deliberate, as I'm told that you can end up going back to these screens later on in the game — should you progress far enough. That's me out, then.

The game itself is a pretty standard platform affair although there are some elements that require expert timing and skill; with enemies moving with various speeds, patterns

and occasionally in their multiples, it's definitely a challenge getting to those pieces of cheese and baggage items.

I found some of the rooms took a lot of navigating and timing to get past dropping nasties, flying birds and stamping machines looking to flatten you. The biggest drawback in particular in this area was having to wait a sustained amount of time to make your move, it meant running out of energy and having to start the game all over again.

Paul Davies

COMMENTS

Control keys:
Q, W, SPACE
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: Colourful
Sound: 128K tunes
General rating:
Frustrating but enjoyble at the same time.

Use of Computer	75%
Graphics:	78%
Playability:	74%
Getting started:	80%
Addictive Qualities:	70%
Overall:	72%

MR HAIR AND THE FLY

Author:
Lee Stevenson,
Pedro Pimenta
Andy Green
Memory: **128K**
Released: **2020**

Mr Hair has taken it upon himself to rescue and claim back the Magical Chalice which was stolen years ago from his home planet by an evil alien race, in the hope of bringing peace and harmony back to his world.

To do this, he must navigate this treacherous alien planet, searching for energy cells which open up doors and create gateways to once locked away paths, leading ultimately to the key chamber where the Chalice is being held.

Given that Mr Hair is well, a single hair (albeit with a pair of eyes), this won't be an easy task; battling against a plethora of nasty alien creatures as well as negotiating other hazards found along the way.

CRITICISM

• The game starts off in the energy chamber which you can navigate back to at any point to replenish your health, should you feel it's getting a little on the low side — an additional feature in this game and a welcome change from the instant-death of the previous *Mr Hair* game.

Mr Hair only has the ability to walk left, right and jump and on occasion, climb up and down vines. There is no 'fire' option, so it's all about jumping and dodging your enemies to progress.

You'll find yourself doing a lot of back and forthing as you explore and try to progress. The reason being that the energy cells that you need to collect open relevant doors, generate more energy cells and make platforms appear and disappear — *Mr Hair and the Fly* is a huge improvement from the original with the added features making this a more rounded game than its predecessor.

Fun, but tough and with enough niceties to keep you encapsulated in the colourful world Mr Hair has found himself in.

Paul Davies

CRITICISM

• The first thing that whacks you in the face in Mr Hair is the colour overload. The game is also rather busy in each of its 40+ rooms, with monster mayhem going on in most of the locations. Quite simply, it feels chaotic, and personally, I'd have liked the level design to be a little more restrained. I much prefer not to fight with the play area.
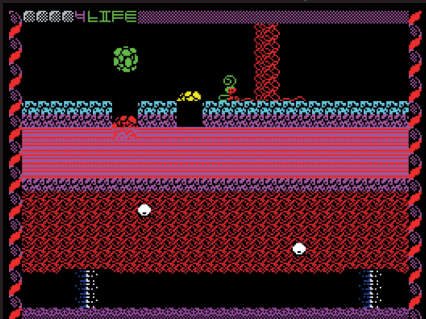
Gordon King

COMMENTS

Control keys: O, P , SPACE
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: Bright!
Sound: AY music
General rating: A colourful, addictive and good looking game.

Use of Computer	82%
Graphics:	84%
Playability:	83%
Getting started:	83%
Addictive Qualities:	82%
Overall:	83%

The best game inlay covers of 1982

In the first of a regular feature, Graeme Mason discusses six of his favourite Spectrum game covers from a particular year. This issue, he focuses on the year when the Speccy first appeared, 1982.


Melbourne House software for the **48K SPECTRUM**

PENETRATOR

*Amazingly Fast Arcade Action!
Includes *Training Mode and
*Unique Customizing Feature
The fastest and most exciting
game for your 48K Spectrum

Penetrator
Melbourne House

Penetrator was one of the big games of 1982. A shameless *Scramble* clone, Melbourne House included the level designer that its programmers had used, giving players the opportunity to design their own landscapes. With sci-fi shoot-'em-ups already common, artists often struggled to create something eye-catching for a game that involved little more than a big spaceship shooting things, and even Oli has been known to express dissatisfaction at having to draw yet another tableau set in outer space. But I've always liked the *Penetrator* cover thanks to its immediacy, a first-person cockpit view that firmly puts the player into the game. Laser fire arches out at the enemies massed in front of the player as a gloved hand frantically tries to dodge the enemy weapons. And in perhaps the coolest way of inserting in-game screens, four screenshots from Penetrator itself sit in the middle display, connecting game and cover image. I had trouble finding out the artist on this one but I suspect it could be Steiner Lund — according to CRASH's interview with the artist, he did a lot of early work for Melbourne House, and the style looks familiar.

Black Crystal
Carnell Software

Black Crystal is an ambitious role-playing game from Carnell Software that reached a wider audience when re-released at a budget price by Mastertronic. The Mastertronic cover isn't particularly noteworthy; but the Carnell Software original, published with a novel, has a marvellously spooky picture, created by an unknown artist known only as 'Emmanuel'. This cover is a delight. A shadowy figure — is it the player character? — reaches out for the eponymous gemstone, the bright colours of the Spectrum emanating upwards from its centre. There's plenty of mystery here, which suits the theme of the game well, yet the aspect that always fascinates me is the character's eyes, one narrower than the other, and sizing up the precious item in front of them, like Indiana Jones and the idol in *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*. The contrast between foreground (the crystal and hand) and background (the shadowy character) is particularly stark in this image, and it looks even better on the large box that Black Crystal came in. It's a shame this proposed six-part series was never completed; Carnell went under shortly after the publication of the third episode, *The Wrath Of Magra*.

BLACK CRYSTAL

An epic role-playing adventure of fantasy in six programs.
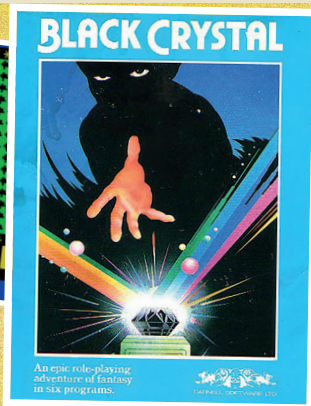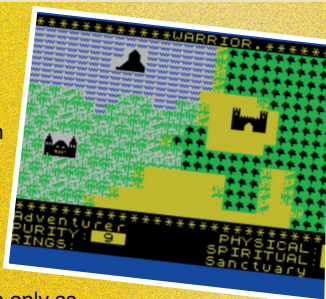
The Chess Player
Quicksilva

This is the first of many covers from David Rowe, who would go on to become famous with his fantastic work on the television series, *Knightmare*. Yet, even this talented artist must have baulked at this assignment, a Spectrum cassette inlay based around the classic game of chess. I think he did a superb job with such limited and action-free material. Sitting opposite the player is a sleek female robot, presumably representing the computing prowess of the ZX Spectrum. The chess board is light brown and red, and appears to be hovering in outer space, as clouds (or are they mountains?) obscure the lower half of the robot. The few remaining pieces in play have extra flashes of ornate elegance, including baroque-style metallic eggs, while the pawns contain shiny orbs, reminding me of David's later work on *Knightmare*. The game itself attempts to add an inspiring background story (apparently you're defending the Earth against an evil being), and includes a very early example of synthesized speech on the Spectrum. It's a competent chess simulation, too, with its easier lower levels giving way to a stiffer challenge by stage four.

Nightmare Park
Breadhill Software

With the game itself created by J.D.S. Cranston, the talent behind *Nightmare Park's* cover art is sadly lost to time, although maybe one day I will try and find out who was behind this fantastic image. It's a BASIC effort from Breadhill Software, a software house that didn't survive much beyond 1982, and was one of many mail-order style companies that sold Spectrum games in its early days. The game is a simple maze adventure, yet, having studied the macabre cover, the plain graphics and non-descript gameplay suddenly transforms it into a fevered dash across the screen. The cover image cleverly taps into the common park area that feature in most towns: a large tree dominates the left of the picture, while to the right sits a tree further in the background. A traditional wrought-iron fence stabs across the screen, but it's the huge bat that stays with the player the most, helped by its evil-looking eyes and human-like claws. It's a shame such an image never got to be seen inside a software shop. Imagine buying *Nightmare Park*, then having to negotiate your local park to get home? That might even give a brave soul like Lloyd the willies.

Spectrum Golf
Quicksilva

Another release highlighted in issue one's Living Guide, *Spectrum Golf*, or just *Golf*, is a 16K simulation of the sport, published by R&R Software. Compared to the likes of US Gold's Leaderboard, released several years later, the graphics are laughably simple, yet it's gameplay that counts, and *Spectrum Golf* still plays a decent round. As to its cassette inlay art, it's a curious image that focuses on an impressively lithe robot, a ZX Spectrum for its head and the traditional Speccy rainbow colours flashing across its chest. Beyond this mid-swing figure is a barren golf course, a few fir trees to the right the only obstacle of note. Most strangely, the mechanical golfer appears to be about to hit the ball in the opposite direction to the hole behind it – in fact, it's standing so close to the ball itself, it's difficult to work out what this Spectrum-for-a-brain is trying to do. Nevertheless, like *The Chess Player*, it's an interesting attempt at trying to create something different — and Spectrum-themed — when confronted with a sport-related game.
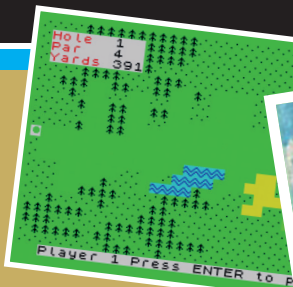
Tyrant Of Athens
M.C. Lothlorien

Lothlorien was renowned for its strategic war games, and this early effort focuses on strife in ancient Greece. The front cover may look a little predictable, but the action appeals to me in the sense of drama it presents. A Spartan warrior, clad in distinctive gold armour and with a fine red plumage, strides across the image, as a warship slips into the depths behind him. The picture is completed with a Spartan war vessel, bright red and blue with a huge sail, approaching the shore, having disposed of all that stand in its way, and given the accuracy that Lothlorien proudly imbued into all of its products, it's hard to imagine that any part of *Tyrant Of Athens'* cover is off the mark. The lithe soldier, wielding a deadly-looking curved sword, is particularly remarkable, despite being in glaring disparity to the mainly text style gameplay of the game itself. Set in 5 BC, the task is to control Athens and its armies, repelling invaders before turning the city into an invading force of its own, and I can imagine the artist, whoever they are, enjoying the scope that the game presents.
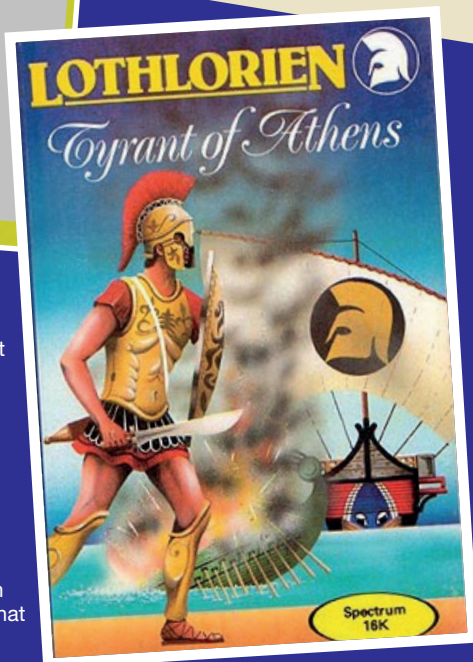
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VISIT THE BELOW SITES FOR MORE EMULATION ACTION

Nick Roberts's PLAYING TIPS

THE WITCH

Only just released this year, *The Witch* by Manu128k is a 'magical' game inspired by Palace Software's 1985 hit, *Cauldron*.

You can see the *Cauldron* influence straight away with a fun little witch whizzing around on her broomstick – but 'Do you have any tips on improving my score,' I hear you cry! Well yes I do…

The Witch is a great combination of flying shoot-'em-up and platform game. In the early screens try not to be too trigger happy with your magic spells. You only get a set amount and the magic meter soon starts to deplete. Instead use your flying skills to zoom (on your broom) around the bats, pumpkins and other scary adversaries.
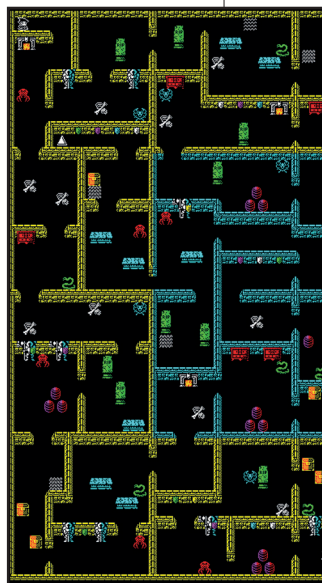
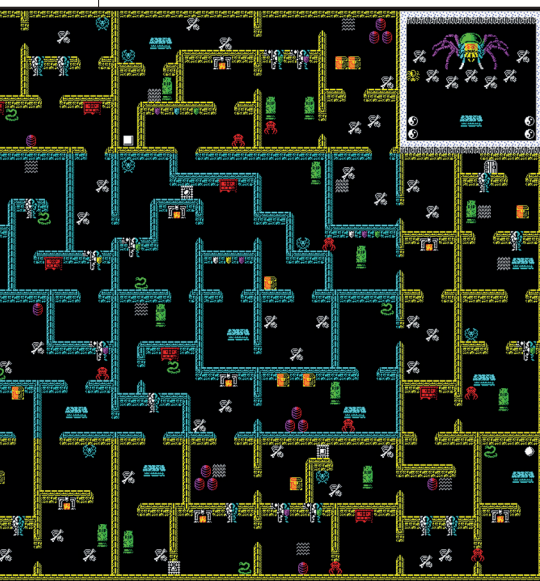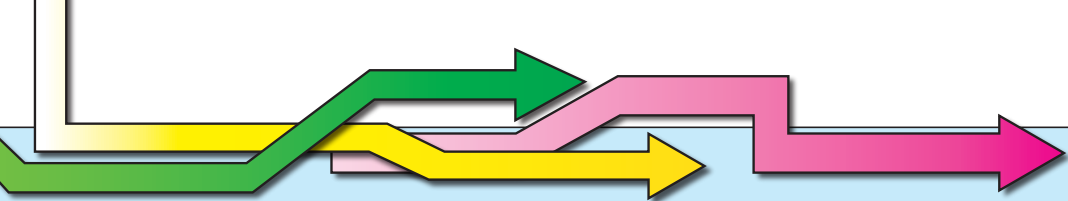It won't be long before you come across a key to pick up down below. Beware though — you can't just swoop down and grab it. You need to land in a safe place, then walk back along the ground to pick up the key.

Of course, it's not as obvious as just unlocking the first door you find either — the entrance to the platform levels is a few screens along to the right.

Take your sweet time in the pixel-perfect platform levels. One wrong step and it'll be like Dorothy clicked her heels together three times — bang!

NEXT SHIFT TIPS

Great to see that classic 8-bit gameplay never dies in this smart Spectrum Next game. Here are a few tips to get you going...

● It's a test of your hand-eye coordination as you must move the two Henrique chaps up and down at the same time. I remember similar games on the old VIC-20 — great fun! Just keep one eye on the top-left conveyor at all times — this is where the Nexts first appear for you to man-handle them through the machine.
● Just take your time to get used to the rhythm of the game while things are slow. The machine soon speeds up!

SOPHIA II MAP & TIPS

Big shout out to Alessandro Grussu for putting together this great map of his game *Sophia II*. You can find lots of great screenshot maps at maps.speccy.cz

I just love the flashbacks to classic Ultimate games like *Atic Atac* and *Sabre Wulf* you get when playing *Sophia II*.
    Just like those classics, success is a case of learning the patterns of the monsters around you. They are very predictable.
    The game has a good speed, so you can easily manoeuvre Sophia around the baddies. Save your health invulnerability for the trickier ones.
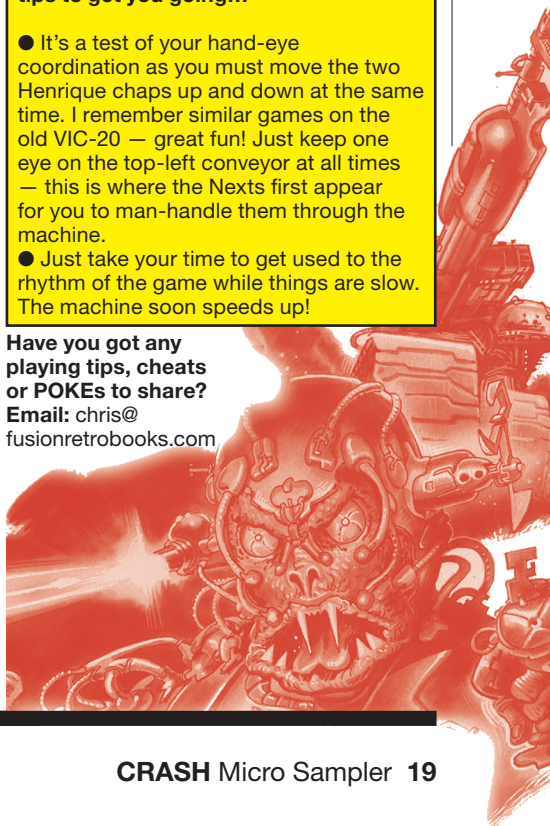

Have you got any playing tips, cheats or POKEs to share? Email: chris@fusionretrobooks.com

LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM

So as my waist gets bigger, Crash has gone smaller, in size anyways. I have been asked to partake in this new micro adventure — another new boss, old and new readers, and letters to answer, lots of them. So onwards once again...

A ROUND OF GOLF JEEVES

Dear Mr. Mangram,
In honour of the new CRASH magazine I would like you to

settle once and for all, whether or not you have any relation (and/or passing resemblance) to the late, great golfer Lloyd Mangrum? I am sure this question has puzzled ZX Spectrum and home computer fans for decades. It is time you came clean!
Regards,
Janne Sirén, Finland

Apart from our taste in sporting hats and a hairy lip with Mr Mangram the golfer,

my only venture into the sport is playing Leaderboard on my rubber keyed friend. I must confess most of my time was spent building sand castles in the bunkers.
LM

Dear Lloyd,
I am from South Africa, and I must tell you, I am very happy that I can get my hands on a new CRASH magazine. Something to read and enjoy, I believe this will be a smart move to have Crash come out once again.
Thank you,
Hendrik Bezuidenhout

Crash is as International as it ever was — great to hear from our friends down South.
LM

AN OLD FRIEND

Dear LM,
So great to see you back at your old typewriter again, it must be 28 years since the last time! It's wonderful to see that the most beloved of Speccy mags is making a comeback and I'm confident that everyone behind it will make it the rip roaring success it deserves to be.
CRASH and indeed the Spectrum completely changed my life when I bought my first issue (number #35) as a mere 13 year old — and I never looked back!
I even stayed loyal through the thinner page years and survived (just) when the mag

disappeared temporarily in late 1991 but was thrilled when it came back, then inconsolable when it finally disappeared for good!!

But like Jimi Hendrix it blazed a trail never bettered during its time on Earth. That we have it again in 2020 is a fantastic thrill.

The Spectrum scene is thriving well into the 21st century (who'd have thunk it!!) and its great to have CRASH back to celebrate such a wonderful scene. Welcome back CRASH — never

leave us again!!! Much Love,
Anders Upton

The cobwebs on the old typewriter were dusted off way back in 2018 for the return of CRASH in the form of the first Annual. Roger begged me on hands and knees, I tell you, to come back and add some class to this rag.

It seems like I may be back for a while as there is a lot to do, especially with a new editor who is a little wet behind the ears and needs a little help. **LM**

TYPE-IN LISTINGS IN CRASH?

Dear Lloyd,
It is amazing that we are getting CRASH back, (ZZap! 64 also). Many years ago I had a C64 but always wanted a Spectrum as well. There are great games for both machines. Thanks to eBay I now have both set up ready to go. I'll be getting my Spectrum Next next year. My question is are you going to do type-ins and a hints and tips section for programming using the Next or original. Thank you all for bringing back my childhood and be safe.
Regards,
Paul ledson

Paul, dear Paul, I think you are mistaking CRASH

with a competitor magazine who filled up their pages with BASIC game listings and coding hints and tips. I hear the new editor was a

```
 10 BORDER 0
 20 PAPER 0
 30 CLS
 40 FOR x=0 TO 248 STEP 8
 45 INK INT (RND*7)+1
 50 PLOT 0,0
 60 DRAW X,175
 70 PLOT 255,0
 80 DRAW -x,175
 90 PLOT 0,175
100 DRAW x,-175
110 PLOT 255,175
120 DRAW -x,-175
130 NEXT X
```

programmer — I bet it was Fortran or COBOL or some other old 1950s language! **LM**

TOO OLD FOR RETRO

Dear Lloyd,
My wife says I am too old to read CRASH — I'm only 73.
Regards,
Worried Fan

I tend to hide my copies of Crash in the garden shed with the lawnmower and the spiders — the latter tend to keep the squeamish away. Alternatively, get with the times and go digital! **LM**

LM NEXT

Dear Lloyd,
It seems that everything old is coming back. We have the new CRASH of course, and we've seen the super successful Spectrum Next, so I was wondering, will we see a new Lloyd on Kickstarter soon? I'm sure Lloyd Next

will be super successful but maybe keep your stretch goals to yourself.
Regards,
AlanH

I keep watching out for our jubbly postman, I am sure he owes me a letter from our beloved Queen as we did turn 100 with the last Annual. Alas, not to

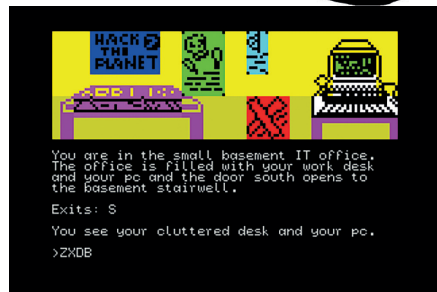be for now, maybe 'Next' year'. **LM**

Adventure Trail

Good tidings and joy to you all my fellow travellers, Welcome! to the Adventure Trail's latest incarnation in this new and exciting quarterly edition of CRASH magazine. Colin Bell once more at your service, CRASH Dungeon Master and guide to the world of high '8-bit' adventure. With the Yuletide season firmly upon us I invite you all to come gather by my warm fire here underneath the hallowed halls of Castle CRASH as we roast some chestnuts and raise a glass to yet another great year of adventuring — no social distancing required here dear reader…

While it remains a crazy world out there and a tough time for many, I'm pleased to see that many of you have found solace in the world of Spectrum adventure which continues to grow and thrive at an impressive rate. With the ZX Spectrum NEXT now sitting pride of place in many of your questing altars we've seen more new enhanced adventures being released along with a number of the classic 48K-128K variety. Indeed, it is an exciting time for adventure gaming on the Spectrum and I, like many of you, look forward to seeing what lies ahead in the new year.

Pump up the Adventure Jam!

Summer this year saw Adventuron hosting "The Next Adventure Jam" where avid adventure fans and authors were quested with the task of using their browsers to create a new text adventure in *Adventuron* with vibrant location graphics.

There was also the option to develop the game for the ZX Spectrum NEXT and / or ZX Spectrum +3 which each of the entries all did. Most notable were *One Last Thing* by Dee Cooke, *Last Night in the Office* by Quizlock and *Rite of the Druid* by Paul Weller

of Sunteam. We take a look at *Rite of the Druid* in this issue's review section. You can play or download the games and check out the 'Jam' results here: https://itch.io/jam/next-adventure-jam

And now with our proceedings concluded let us put on our best fur armour, jump on our battle sleighs and turn to face the trail once more as we take a bold step forward onto this issue's news and reviews.

adventure trail news

Hibernated Sci-Fi Sequel coming!

Author Stefan Vogt has confirmed that development of his highly anticipated Sci-Fi adventure

sequel *Hibernated 2* is now very close to completion.

The game continues the story of Olivia Lund who along with her faithful spider droid sidekick, Vlad, arrive on a strange plant in the Andromeda sector where she must unravel the mysteries surrounding a long forgotten alien civilisation.

The game is set to be released across a variety of 8-bit and 16-bit formats as a digital download and as a physical Collector's Edition which of course means feelies! and an audio book narrated by none other than Christian Simpson, aka Perifractic, that will recap the story from the first game.

And if that wasn't enough for you all I can also confirm that Stefan has announced *Hibernated 1 - The Directors Cut* which will see the original game expanded and running on the engine he developed for *Hibernated 2*.

As well as addressing some plot holes the game will feature additional narrative content and play more like the Infocom adventures from the 1980s.

Stefan is very excited about the Director's Cut as he feels that the revised game showcases what he initially had envisaged for *Hibernated 1* but was restricted due to the limitations of the first engine.

Heroine Emilia Vittorini set to return in third outing!

I'm pleased to announce that Davide Bucci has begun work on the third game in his adventure series that looks set to continue the exploits of super sleuth Emilia Vittorini. Titled *Silk Dust* the game sees Emilia going back to her racing roots as she represents her father's car company ITA who are in the process of delivering a new car to one of their prestigious clients.

The client in question is Princess Briccorosso who intends to race in the Silk Road Rally from Cairo to Peking. Your role is to ensure the smooth delivery of the car and make sure everything is functioning as it should.

I'm sure it won't be long until Emilia sets off on a new and exciting adventure with danger around every corner.

Adventure Trail

The Seance

Producer: Quantum Sheep
Free download, ZX Spectrum 48K

```
Dining Room
London, England. 1886. After
the loss of his wife, Emily,
Henry Smith seeks to commune
with her from beyond the grave
through the famous medium
Madame Sousa.
Copyright Quantum Sheep, 2020
Thanks: Evan Wright / Damien G

Dining Room
Most of the furniture has gone
in preparation for your move
to Richmond... The dining
room, empty now, once hosted
the intelligentsia of London.
To the West you see the door
to the kitchen, with the
Morning Room visible to the
North.
>
```

The Seance by Quantum Sheep is a short eerie text adventure set in the Victorian era and created for the ZX Spectrum using the Lantern Text-adventure IDE compiler. You play Henry Smith, a war veteran and widower who has lost his beloved wife Emily due to illness. Almost one year on you can't help but feel there is a presence in the house that you used to share with Emily and you dare not look in the mirror anymore as you are certain you are seeing things that mysteriously move around the house and with the pain just too much to bear, you have decided that it's time for a fresh start — but not before you attempt to contact Emily to ask for her forgiveness for not being there in her time of need. To do so you'll need to conduct a séance and for this you'll need to enlist the help of renowned medium Madame Sousa, who arrives at the front door of the house at the beginning of the game.

Your goal is to gain access to the

aren't really there.

As well as this you have noticed that objects have begun to mysteriously move around the house

attic where Madame Sousa will conduct the séance. To achieve this you'll need to find a number of objects located around the-house, some hidden, each of which are required to solve a small number of logical puzzles. As you move around the house things will start to happen like blood pouring from the walls and items of furniture moving by themselves.

Throughout the game Madame Sousa will follow you around the house and you can ask about various things which may lead to tips and advice.

The Séance offers a total of four different endings which is a nice addition and offers a little something in terms of replay value if only very minor. One criticism is that if you complete the game and then decide to play again you'll find that objects are where you left them from the previous game and furniture that you have opened remains open.

Another is that the font used is rather large and the spacing between lines of text isn't great, making the screen hard to read at times.

COMMENTS

Difficulty:
Fairly Easy
Graphics: Text only.
Presentation:
Atmospheric and spooky
General Rating:
Recommended, detailed storytelling that captures the imagination.

Atmosphere	85%
Graphics:	65%
Playability:	60%
Getting started:	85%
Overall:	69%

Rite of the Druid

Producer: Paul Weller — Sunteam
Free download, ZX Spectrum NEXT

Earning first place in both the Graphics and Storyline categories in this year's "NEXT Adventure Jam", *Rite of the Druid* is a new graphical adventure for the ZX Spectrum NEXT and the creation of Paul Weller of Sunteam. With *Rite of the Druid,* Paul has returned to the roots of the more classical style adventure game featuring a text parser with standard verb noun input along with some rather nicely drawn and colourful backgrounds that superbly match each of the game's locations and showcase the NEXT's enhanced graphical capabilities.

You play an unnamed character who as part of a small tribe is currently in the process of undergoing a ritual to finally earn the full title of Druid. To achieve this however, Chief Druid Drem, tells you that you must first enter another realm that is beyond your own and there find a sacred rune that will ultimately guide your path and return you back to the tribe a fully fledged Druid.

To enter this realm, you have to drink a strange glassful of foul-smelling purple ooze which knocks you


```
horizon, shimmering in the sunlight.
Exits: E, D
You see a big, mossy boulder.
>d
The cliff is too sheer and would mean
certain death if you attempted to climb
down.

>
```

unconscious. You soon you awaken to find that you are all alone in a strange hilly grassland in the middle of a set of stone circles. And thus, our short yet enjoyable adventure begins…

As mentioned, the game itself is very short with less than twenty-five screens but it feels bigger and Paul has done a fantastic job of describing each location in fine vivid detail. Just about every location type you can imagine is represented here from grasslands to marshy bogs, sandy deserts to dark caves and snowy mountains to active volcanoes.

There are no characters as such to interact with although there are various animals wandering around, but I'll leave it to you to work out what purpose they serve.

Object wise there are plenty in the game, most of which must be discovered. With the exception of only one object that I could find no use for, all the others had a purpose in helping you solve the game's many puzzles which I found to be well thought out and fairly logical. A welcome addition to the game is the several endings that it features and while each one is only slightly different, I found it fun nonetheless to go back and see what each one was like. Overall *Rite of the Druid* is an enjoyable adventure that's full of atmosphere and ideal if you only have a short amount of time to play.

Great for beginners to the genre.

COMMENTS

Difficulty:
Fairly easy, short game.
Graphics:
Spectrum Next enhanced graphics.
Presentation:
Polished.
General Rating:
Ideal for newcomers.

Atmosphere	90%
Graphics:	70%
Playability:	75%
Getting started:	100%
Overall:	84%

Well, here we are in much smaller living quarters but I'm sure we'll all get along and things will go swimmingly after an initial teething period.

Anyway, once again I have been asked to rummage through the online galleries and potentially discover artwork that is new to the readers out in the real world.

I decided, as is my wont, that this month, the first in our new format, I shall be completely controversial and focus my attentions on four examples all by the same incredibly talented chap; Mr Marco Antonio Del Campo Gomez, or MAC as he is known on the Spectrum scene.

I must stress that this is not me saying I could not find suitable examples by other gifted exponents of Spectrum art, but every time I am called upon to do these reviews I am always torn with my selections because of the volume of work he has produced.

1: **Batman** 2018

Here we have as fine a Dark Knight Detective as one could hope to see in pixelated form. This is one of two he has created, and it was a tough decision, but this particular image ticks lots of design boxes for me.

Clean lines, bold use of colour regardless of the liberties taken with Batman's body armour and great composition. The images from the original game art have been manipulated to perfection and form a visual shape that contains action, potential motion and the grim visage of Gotham's defender executed magnificently.

2: **Thanatos** 2020

I don't think I'm being unfair when I say that in my opinion, this particular image is much better than the original box art.

It leaps from the screen; the rich saturated colours truly make it pop. The sky has a terrible heat about it, as our heroine commands her great lizard to fly over a burning wasteland.

The delicate lines in her hair and gown are just enough and express a fluidity and grace. The dragon looks heavier, more muscular than the painted version. It is a strong image, virtually identical to the original in composition but with a lot more power and impact.

3: **Phantis** 2016

The sheer level of detail that fills this composition is phenomenal and is virtually identical to the original box art, again by Alfonso Azpiri.

Digging up more information regarding this particular title, I was fascinated to discover that this is *Game Over Two*, the sequel to the Ocean/Imagine release whose adverts were infamously censored albeit somewhat belatedly in gaming magazines at the time.

This image, for me is infinitely superior to that of the first release for many reasons. Yes, there is a statuesque and gravity defying warrior-woman, but the space-goblins or intergalactic troglodytes who are pressing far too close for comfort and propriety are both menacing and comedic.

4: **Rocky** 2020

I was oblivious to the fact that this was actually a game and initially assumed it to be a mere mock-up, but with some careful research, I discovered this to be a masterful translation of the superb artwork of Madrid's Alfonso Azpiri.

The sheer force of this image is amazing, along with a feeling I get that it harks back to the pulp art of the 40s and 50s when men were men and happily beat each other to mincemeat on the cover of many a lurid magazine.

MAC's version surpasses the original. The dark shadows add an element to the image that was somehow missing from the box art, wonderful though it was. The simple use of white for the ropes and the tiny tip of the hat to the original artist with his name on the ropes to the right are the work of someone at one with the machine.

![CRASH — MICRO GAMES ACTION]

ROGER, MY HERO

I used to read CRASH every month, like many of us ZX Spectrum fans. It guided me on what games to spend my pocket money on, and made me feel special and a part of something. It also introduced me to art I had never seen before (I had to hide some issues under the bed so my mum would not see them).

As the years ticked by, and responsibilities of life took over, I never forgot CRASH and the years of teenage happiness the Spectrum brought me.

With the resurgence of retro over the last however many years, my interest in old gaming resurfaced and with social media becoming the norm, I hunted down — I mean looked up, some of my childhood icons, one being a gentleman called Roger Kean. I just wanted to say 'thank you' to him.

We talked for years in the virtual world and finally met at Play Expo in 2011 — Roger was *perfectly comfortable* in my fan-boy presence, always the professional!

Over the years since, we have worked together to create some wonderful books including the CRASH Annual and have now met on many occasions.

With Rog and Oli's blessing (and Future Ltd), we have a new team (comprising of some of the old) that are now embarking on bringing CRASH back as a regular magazine.

Thanks for your trust guys — this means so much to me and the team and I love you both dearly. I hope we do not disappoint.

Chris Wilkins

A SAMPLE

What you are holding right now is the CRASH issue 1 sampler, given to those Kickstarter backers who helped bring the 2021 Annual to life.

For the full issue, expect more reviews, features, interviews and the missing sections.

'Long live CRASH!', as a great person once said.

the end